

Reading and Reflecting – with ‘Meet the Managers’

by Tom Taylor

A project manager from UK

In a busy world is there sufficient time to develop and apply our reflection capabilities? This ‘Meet the Managers’ series of short stories may appear to be frivolous and irreverent. But their true purpose is to stimulate our reflective skills – in ourselves as readers and with our colleagues as teams or communities or families – for each story.

These reflections can be shallow or deep, quick or longer, reactionary or considered. Having read and reflected on these pieces it may be possible to read and reflect on other articles in PMWJ.

Very best wishes with your reading and reflecting.

No.7 – A nice day – for a meeting ¹

It is going to be a nice day. Hooray!

The weather forecast is positive. Hooray!

And the Managers are expecting a welcome visit from the Designers. Hooray!

Mummy Manager, Daddy Manager and the two junior Managers think of themselves as a cohesive group. However, when they get together with the Designers, and with others, the Managers recognise they are all parts of an extended, most effective and talented team.



This frequently also happens on projects. It is certainly better if most people think they are in the team.

When the Designers arrived, because it was **quite** a pleasant day the junior Managers and junior Designers were sent outside, while the seniors stayed indoors.

¹ How to cite this work: Taylor, T. (2026). A nice day – for a meeting, Meet the Managers, series story 7, *PM World Journal*, Vol XV, Issue IX, September.

These apparently arbitrary and diverse location arrangements often happen on projects. Full co-location is not always required, encouraged or appreciated and in fact is sometimes avoided.

If the day had been **really** pleasant then the senior Managers and senior Designers may have chosen to sit outside and would send the juniors inside.



This frequently happens on projects when senior parties can change the rules and arrangements to suit themselves and their changing preferences.

The Managers would advise the Designers on matters such as the planning of their holidays and bus timetables.



The Designers would advise the Managers on matters such as furniture and paint colours.

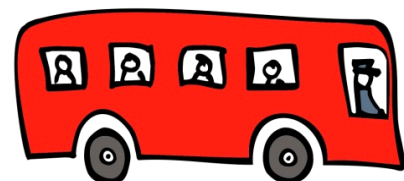
Each party would usually express appreciation to the other – but occasionally completely disregard the advice. This has been known to happen on projects – sometimes with embarrassment later, with finger pointing and legal disputes.

The Designers live on a really long road – called Creative Streak, with lots of other families and groups. Strangely the Managers are only familiar with the singular Designer family.

Such limited connections often happen around fields for project selections – which might be a good thing or might be bad.

As a special treat the Managers and the Designers would sing songs all together. Hooray!

“The Wheels on the Bus” was a particular favourite – with actions.



On projects it is preferable for team members to be sitting safely on the bus and not be under the wheels. The Managers always carried a first aid kit for possible mishaps when on buses or singing about buses.

With visitors visiting and a nice day the usual conventions might change; for example with lots of storytelling **before** tea time. However it would still need to be bed time after bath time. Some things never change. Even on a pleasant day. Hooray!

Similarly on projects also there are absolute conventions – and then there is flexibility.

Bye Bye Designers. Bye Bye Managers. Bye Bye everyone. See you later – at the bus stop.

Questions for Aspiring Managers for responses:

- 1. What is a “team”?***
- 2. Who would you like in your “team”?***
- 3. What would your team song be?***
- 4. Can your team sing? Together?***

Tip for the story teller:

Think ahead – what are the options for verses on the bus?

Tom Taylor is the author of the “Meet the Managers” collection and is known as:

- *A popular, confident and energetic speaker and broadcaster,*
- *A prolific author and publisher on innovative business and original management issues,*
- *An experienced and enthusiastic lecturer and course leader,*
- *And an award-winning, highly experienced manager of projects, advisor and consultant.*

The illustrations are by Rob Dee, a talented designer and illustrator from UK.

A little more About the Author



Tom Taylor

London, UK



Tom Taylor is Principal with Dashdot and joint founding director of Buro Four in the United Kingdom. For many years, he has been a central figure in the Association for Project Management (APM) in the UK as former APM president, vice-president, Chair and London Branch. Via APM he has achieved Chartered Project Professional (ChPP), Registered Project Professional (RPP), an Honorary Fellowship, the inaugural President's Medal from Professor Martin Barnes and APM's prestigious Sir Monty Finneston Award for lifetime achievement. Visit www.apm.org.uk

Tom's professional career so far has been in property and construction in UK in front line roles – from theatres to manufacturing, from residential to harbour works – significant to less so – with contractors, designers and as a consultant – as employer, employee and entrepreneur - within major organisations and “all-on-my-own” – prize winning and mundane. It's been rewarding and enjoyable – so far.

He is an advisor on projects, programmes, enterprises and business, as principal at Dashdot – a consultancy and publishing vehicle – please go to www.dashdot.co.uk

He is a joint founder from 1985 and occasional advisor with Buro Four – an eminent project management outfit based in UK - please go to www.burofour.com

Tom has been a guest lecturer at several universities, a previous Visiting Professor at Salford University and an external examiner at UCL.

Tom is a supporter of Membership Associations (MAs) of International Project Management Association (IPMA), Young Crews - and their events. Visit www.ipma.org

Tom attends, speaks and hosts PM events in UK and round the world. He holds honorary positions with project management associations in Finland, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Portugal, Spain and UK plus with IPMA.

“Continuing to be involved in front line projects and the journey of the project management community, over the last fifty years or so, has certainly been fascinating, rewarding and

enjoyable – as a bystander, passenger, navigator and driver. Changing technologies and surprising opportunities have had significant impact for me, and on me. However, it is people, the colleagues, who are most important – with our collective commitment, common purpose and good humour. I have been very fortunate indeed in that aspect. Approaching my likely career midpoint, I am looking forward to more good projects, with good people, with good humour.”

A current personal profile of Tom is available at www.tomtaylor.info and he may be contacted at tomtaylor@dashdot.co.uk